



Face Coverings: Frequently Asked Questions

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The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services recommends that Michiganders wear a face covering when outside of their home to help stop the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Wearing a face covering is an additional precaution we can take that may help stop the spread of COVID-19. The best way to keep from getting sick is to stay home as much as possible, practice social distancing – keep at least 6 feet of distance from others, and good hand hygiene.

What is a face covering?

- A face covering is any well-secured cloth (like a bandana or scarf) that covers your mouth and nose.
- A face covering is different from a surgical or N95 mask which must be reserved for healthcare workers.

Who should and should not wear a face covering?

Cloth face coverings **should not** be placed on:

- young children under age 2,
- anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, and
- anyone otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Cloth face coverings **should** be worn by:

- All others when they need to be outside their home and within 6 feet of others.
- People who are sick should wear a face covering while at home if they cannot maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others.
- People who are sick and who need to leave home, such as to get urgent medical care, should always wear a face covering.

Do I need to wear a face covering all the time when outside my house?

- **If you are sick**, yes. Remember you must stay home if you are sick and only leave for essential medical care. Arrange for essential items, like groceries, to be delivered to you through a delivery service or through friends or family.
- **If you are not sick**, you should wear a face covering whenever you need to leave home and might be closer than 6 feet from others. Examples include using public transportation, riding in a taxi or car service, walking on a busy street, going to pharmacies and grocery stores, and going to the doctor or a hospital.
- **Essential workers** should also wear a face covering at work when they cannot maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and others.

Do I need to wear a face covering when I am exercising?

No — as long as you maintain at least 6 feet from others.

People should only do exercises that allow them keep physical distance from others. Walking, running, and biking outside are good examples of activities that do not require shared equipment or close contact with others.

I was confirmed to have COVID-19 and am better now. Do I still need to wear a face covering?

Yes – everyone that is able should wear a face covering when outside of their home and it is not possible to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between others. Social distancing is still necessary, even when using a face covering.

We don't yet know how long the virus remains in a person's body, or whether it is possible to get sick again. Using facemasks in public and practicing social distancing is still important for people who were sick and recovered.

Remember if you had or may have had COVID-19, you should not leave the house except for essential medical care or to get essential needs until all the following are true:

- It has been at least 10 days since your symptoms started or since you tested positive for COVID-19 **and**
- You have been fever-free for the last 3 days without taking fever-reducing drugs such as Tylenol or ibuprofen **and**
- Your overall illness has improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved).

Why is this being recommended now?

As we learn more about COVID-19, sometimes recommendations change. There is increasing evidence that people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus, and that droplets produced when breathing, speaking, or singing may spread COVID-19 from person to person.

This evidence informed the decision to recommend face coverings. The use of face coverings is one more simple tool that may help reduce the spread of the virus – especially from people who are infected and don't know it yet.

How often do I need to wash my face covering?

If you are using a cloth face covering, we recommend washing once a day by hand or machine using detergent. The face covering should be fully dry before using. You should have a couple of face coverings so you can rotate for washing.

Are there precautions I should take with my face covering?

- In taking on and off a face covering, you will likely touch your face. As such, please wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and warm water are not

available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol every time before and after removing or putting on your mask.

- Do not put a used face covering in places where others can touch them or where germs trapped in your face covering can touch other surfaces, such as counter tops or your kitchen table.
- Do not throw your face covering loose in a bag or backpack. We recommend keeping a paper bag with you to store your face covering if you will be taking it off outside your house.

Is it possible to make your own face covering?

Yes! A face covering can be a scarf, bandana or other cloth. [Watch this video from the U.S. Surgeon General](#) to see ideas about creating a face covering with household items.

What is the best fabric for a mask?

Use tightly woven cotton, such as quilting fabric or cotton sheets.

Are medical grade masks such as N95 or surgical masks better than home made masks?

Medical grade masks need to be saved for use by health care providers only. Use of homemade masks for people with lower risk exposure is a good way to decrease the chance of exposure to COVID-19.